☰

🔍

ACHIM SZEPANSKI   2024-02-27

GLOBAL CAMP POLITICS

NECROPOLITICS   AIRPORT, CAMP, CAPITAL, MIGRANT, POVERTY, SURPLUS
POPULATION

It is usually known that towards the border, when seen from the world interiors of capital, the air becomes colder, today one should rather say hotter, and thus the living conditions become worse, the danger grows that one could encounter groups coming from outside, perhaps even subversive groups, the abnormal, the particularly poor, the hunchbacked and the insane, the "gypsies" and "negroes", even the human garbage that only the Marxists have dared to call surplus population so far. In the end, only the excessive marking of borders, electronic fences, barbed wire, satellite systems, Frontex, ships and apotropaic structures that are inscribed in the border lines, and sparkling additional lines from the virtual world of fighter jet technology, or affective delusional systems that are ritually circulated in the feel-good oases

of the West, can help against all these forces. It was Gilles Deleuze who once said: "In delusion there is always a Negro, a Jew, a Chinese, a Great Mogul, an Aryan" (Deleuze 2005: 26).

All of this can be extended at will and underpinned with abundant empirical material as an application of the marking of an inside/outside distinction, but it would become increasingly bleak, it would almost drive you out of your mind, since today it is precisely a matter of favoring the cases of blurring this distinction, as was perhaps once the case in earlier societies at carnivals or potlatches. Instead, the progressive regression that determines the capital relationship has merely eliminated God, who was still excluded from the distinction between inside and outside in the Middle Ages, and, without anyone replacing him, has pushed his immanent boundary ever further in front of himself. Only if capital as production for the sake of production finds its temporary limit in profit, which is always lacking, and above all in the socially and politically cultivated consumption of finite human beings, can obstacles still be placed in the way of capital on its way to the summit of all summits, which it itself is, in its own internal space. It would then have to take into account a mass of potent and socialized money owners and their political significance. But if capital merely insists on financial transactions, objective production processes and procedural rules and materializes itself in freeways, luxury yachts, televisions, computers, rockets and frozen pizza – trash, and last but not least excludes a larger part of humanity from its consumption, then on the one hand it no longer needs to respect borders in internal spaces, while at the same time the border between center and periphery breaks into the inner world space of capital itself with shocking drasticness. In comparison to the poverty of life in the office, the majority of consumer goods in the feel-good oases in the north now appear to be an abundance. After all, in view of the long time spent toiling away in the office or, alternatively, being bored, all we need at home to regenerate is a computer, hotplate and bed, while the stereo system, luxury barbecue and sofa set are uselessly present in our homes, just as they were in shop windows before. It is also this dynamic that makes capital seemingly limitless. If we take a closer look, the world interior of capital is a structured inner world in which, similar to medieval mysticism, a passionate inner interest is pursued and the path to perfection is imagined as the path in and to a center. Today, however, this shameless concentration on the inner world is not possible without the exploitation and devastation of the "outside" – imperial colonialization, capital exports and the import of raw materials, the TUI catalog and mass travel. To a certain extent, all this is always an imposition for the subject delirious on the inside, especially if it is on the losing side, and one is only too eager to escape it. And so the collective empowerment of oblivion can feed the almost extraterrestrial souls of the people in the feel-good oases of capital with political and economic sadisms in their, would you believe it, neo-Buddhist-inspired glide along the obsessive paths of appropriation, purification and wellness, which are constantly approached from the outside by unsavory figures: Criminals, devils, vermin – monstrosities that must stand for all the illusionary waste and irritation possibilities of the salvation path of the semi-privileged inwards, a path that, strangely enough, only ever leads back to the bestiality of the possessive individual, but which is absorbed by the socio-psychological imperatives of the financial political economy on the sea of fibrillating money capital without leaving any bubbles behind.

Let's be honest, the super-rich are affected by champagne, high-sex caviar, the most trivial

lobster binges or Berlusconi's sex games will, over time, become like poisonous slime, which is why they have to go for a while to a well-tempered survival training in Wanatu for a while, for example, until they are until they vomit because of too much medication or an overdose feeling of nature. The poor, on the other hand, hallucinate with their glazed gazes at the advertising images of Pepsi-Cola and Pommery, they hallucinate snow-white beaches on which the luxury jet-setters, who are buried in their coffins in the sand the sun-drenched evenings, are on the verge of rotting away.-

Capitalism reconfigures the world on the basis of two spatial models: the airport and the warehouse. Airports function as secure spaces of circulation and consumption for the wealthy and well-documented. The camp is abandoned and sometimes fought over, serving as a resource and a dumping ground. Both the airport and the camp are intensively monitored and policed, but only so that the separation between them can be maintained even more strongly. The world's airports become a contiguous archipelago of air-conditioned shopping malls, while the camp is left as a wasteland for humanity's surplus – increasingly polluted and impoverished – and if its inhabitants rebel, the camp can easily be reduced to rubble.

The clearly fixed borderline between states has long since given way to an unstable and flexible border area, whereby the division of southern states into countries of refuge, transit and camp states, countries of origin or safe third countries does not initially represent a violation of the sovereignty of these states, but rather the leading imperialist states primarily want to develop instruments to regulate the refugee routes on a global level, such as the shifting of borders by the EU deep into Africa. In the meantime, there are once again detention camps in and off Europe, which are called hotspots or anchor centers, and the Mediterranean is being monitored under the direction of the EU border protection agency Frontex, with the well-known consequences of refugees drowning. War refugees and parts of the global surplus population, who are not even granted the pleasure of exploitation by capital, are confronted with the various forms of graduated state operations of camp formation and the integrated systems of repatriation management in Europe, for example. In the future, refugees will have to deal with an increase in the number of deportations and the creation of new governmental organizations and security institutions that are excessively concerned with the management of border spaces, which goes hand in hand with the militarization of everyday life in these spaces, inevitably transposing biopolitics into thanatos politics. Ultimately, the surplus population of the South should also succumb to death at home due to global warming, instead of perhaps coming up with the foolish idea of fleeing to the North. The imperialist Thanatos policy demands the closing of borders, the narrowing of the possessive extremism of the elites and the middle classes in the metropolises and the genocide or a kind of super-Auschwitz for the surplus population in the South, especially the genocide of those who will try to escape the deadly warming of the globe in the future.

The Libyan military is currently transferring repatriated refugees to detention camps, where some of them are being abused, tortured and otherwise humiliated, without the slightest objection from European authorities and national governments. Germany and France want to supply weapons to African states that can hardly be distinguished from "failed states" in order to push Europe's external borders further into Africa. More people are now dying in the

deserts of Africa than in the Mediterranean, which governments and the EU are willing to accept. And more and more inhabitants of certain regions of the global South, where global warming is causing the most extreme rise in temperatures and where desertification will continue, will feel the brutal hand of the imperialist bunker states by first being disqualified as criminals, thieves, murderers and rapists, indeed as sub-humans who are beneath the dignity of the oh-so-enlightened perspectives of Western civilization, before they are finally locked up in camps.

It should not be forgotten that African companies are denied access to European markets, as stipulated in the various free trade agreements between African countries and the EU, while companies based in Europe are flooding African economies with their state-subsidized goods and depriving the local populations of their livelihoods – just think of the dumping poultry that is delivered to Ghana and is driving the local poultry industry there to ruin. It is companies from the EU that are emptying Senegal's coastal waters of fish, thereby ruining Senegal's fishing industry. Intensive land grabbing is destroying food and fertile soils (palm oil plantations in the Ivory Coast, roses from Kenya, peanuts from Senegal, etc.) and fishing areas, raw material deposits (uranium from Niger, Chad and Mali) and cheap labor are being appropriated and shamelessly exploited by Western capital. Last but not least, parts of the surplus population in the South have to undercut each other in the competition for cheap wage labor or informal work and ultimately end up in the large slums of the local metropolises.[1]

The racist phantasm, which is always part of state racism that excludes the foreigner and monitors and regulates the life and death of the population, has at the moment taken on a slight, if not unintentional, modification. In accordance with the general rules of the game of neoliberalism, we are also observing a further development from the security dispositive to the risk dispositive. The racially connoted migration discourse initially presents the indigenous population as an integral, quasi-organic body, characterized by clear boundaries to the outside world, which must be defended against the hordes and nomads from the South who threaten the healthy homogeneity of the national body. And today, in the expansion from the security to the risk dispositive, this includes the strict differentiation between desired qualified foreign specialists, of whom there is a shortage in Germany in some sectors, and the unwanted refugee, who stands for the mass of useless human waste from the global South.[2]

Let us return to the concept of the camp. Giorgio Agamben has reminded us that the first camps were set up in Europe and that the sequence of internment camp – concentration camp – extermination camp has a very real lineage. (Agamben 2002: 130f.) If we follow Hannah Arendt's classification, then we must recognize three types of camps in the 20th century. 1) In "Hades" we found "those relatively mild forms of neglectful eviction", according to Arendt, "which threatened to become fashionable for undesirable elements of all kinds – refugees, stateless persons, asocials, the unemployed – even in non-totalitarian states" (Arendt 1948: 315), think today in Germany of the anchor centers for asylum seekers; 2) "purgatory", the Soviet gulag, where work is compulsory, and 3) "hell", a label that applies exclusively to the concentration camps of National Socialism, which are characterized by the brutal humiliation and extermination of their inmates. It must be added that the concentration camps of the fascist state of exception fix the same spatial matrix as the national territory in

order to concretize themselves as an enclosure for the internal enemies on the national territory. In the camps, the borders are incorporated into the national space. (Poulantzas 1978: 97) The concentration camp is to be understood as a kind of laboratory in which specific techniques of work and organization, techniques of discipline and practices of the natural sciences are arranged in such a way that they can be inscribed into the self-referential system of absolute annihilation in the sense of a technocratic totalitarianism that suspends every productive function of work. Maurice Blanchot has differentiated this type of annihilation somewhat: "And labor is everywhere, at all times. When oppression is absolute, there is no more leisure, no more 'free time'. Sleep is monitored. The meaning of work is then the destruction of work in and through work. But if, as happened in some concentration camps, work consists of dragging stones to a place at a run, piling them up and then, still running, bringing them back to the starting point … then work can no longer be destroyed by any sabotage if it is already destined to destroy itself. Nevertheless, it retains its meaning; not only to destroy the worker, but, directly, to occupy him, to fix him, to control him and at the same time to make him aware that production and non-production are one and the same thing, is also work." (Blanchot 2005: 102-103) The industrial production of death thus refers not only to the superfluousness of man, to which Arendt also referred, but also to the associated superfluousness of work, whereby work is retained, even when it is reduced to a simple presence in space, as is often enough the case today.

In his book The World as an Extermination Camp, the sociologist Christoph Dries, on the other hand, followed up Hannah Arendt's and Günther Anders' comments on the camp with the hitherto little-noticed term "world as a camp state". According to Dries, this term refers to the contemporary world, which is gradually approaching a state that can be described as a "world state camp" in contrast to the system of concentration camps, a state that is the result of a rather unplanned, successive development, in the course of which the world is being turned into a camp, that it assumes the status of an extermination camp encompassing the entire globe, whereby the boundary between inside and outside, which is still constitutive of the Nazi camp, implodes, so that the camp ultimately no longer has an environment and the world itself "regresses into an unimaginable 'waste place'", a "human cesspool", a "disposable world". (Dries 2012: 353) If human reproduction today is less about the concept of race than about the genetic code, then it is precisely at this point that the superfluousness of humans seems to assume an inevitable development. 3

We cannot discuss this position any further here, except to say that the conclusions of this view are in part close to those of Agamben, who, however, in order to determine the modes of operation of power and encampment, examined in particular the relationship between sovereignty and territory, establishing a close relationship between sovereignty, state of exception and encampment by short-circuiting the juridical-institutional model of state sovereignty with Foucault's biopolitical analysis of power (disciplining populations and bodies). The camp integrates both sovereignty and power, insofar as the general state of exception, which represents an at least temporary suspension of state order, is translated into a continuous space. Thus, for Agamben, the camps are definitely places of exception within a state territory, but at the same time outside the normalized scope of the law, or, to put it another way, the camp is a space outside the "normal" legal order without being an external space. By denying its inmates any legal status in the refugee camps, they are reduced to their

bare physical existence, thereby executing on them an act of absolute power as a proper technique of governance. In this respect, the camp is a place in which law is always created as a result of lawlessness.

In analyses that follow on from Agamben and deal with migration movements at the edges of Europe, some authors (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, Tsianos 2008) have questioned the definition of the camp as a space of confinement (immobilization) and as a disciplinary means of exclusion by bringing the factors of time and mobility into play in order to highlight the diffuseness of today's camp structures. For example, the European Schengen camps are not to be understood as mere camps, but rather, following Paul Virilio, as "speed boxes", which attempt to regulate refugee movements by "decelerating" their speed. Through the specific dynamization of migration, the camps take on a temporal dimension and are designed as transit stations or temporary stations in which only temporary mobility control takes place along heterogeneous migrant escape routes.

These statements in turn partially coincide with the analyses of the American theorist Thomas Nail, who argues that the systemic violence inherent in the border should not only be seen as an effect of the operative paradox of state sovereignty (exclusion qua law), as Agamben does, but increasingly also as a function of micropolitical borders, indeed of border spaces, which would allow a diffuse social violence against migrants and refugees to take effect and thus maintain them precisely. (Nail 2015)

For the migrants themselves, the social body increasingly functions like a fluid border space in which surveillance is permanent. In his book The Figure of the Migrant, Thomas Nail describes the 21st century as that of the migrant, a figure that should not, however, be equated with the refugee.4 This also calls into question the previous definition of borders. Borders are a modern construction that implies parceled, discontinuous and fragmented spaces and whose grid leads to the definition of an inside and an outside. The task of the state is to homogenize and close off these fragmented spaces, and through this unification it constitutes itself, which means that the borders and territories do not precede the unification of the state within, but are created uno actu with it. A segmented chain of individual places and locations now comprises the interior of a national territory, as part of the exercise of state power. Far from destroying nation-states, today the temporary states of exception and the fascisms operating within them have exacerbated the paradox of exclusion/inclusion, precisely by setting in motion a decentralized and multiple institutionalization of migration that today requires flexible demarcations that diffuse into the diverse ways of living and working of migrants.5

In unison, multinational corporations and imperialist states have created a structural invisibility of exceptionalism or the state of exception. The borders are only the politically visible line of this inclusion and exclusion, while the border dispositif or border apparatus, which expands the borders and is rather invisible, continues to include and exclude, but less through an insurmountable wall than with the help of multiple passages that can be easily crossed by the capital flows (to make profits, establish control and security) and by the migrants under certain conditions, while the refugees and the surplus population do not even enter these passages or at best get stuck in them. However, a flow can itself become a wall, for which the nation states in particular then stand, if one considers their trade restrictions, currency

relations and agreements that restrict, divert and redirect the free flow of goods and capital. The border dispositif, which does not coincide with geographical borderlines, is characterized by a certain self-regulation and self-transformation, especially for those in power, because they can advance and militarize borderlines. (Bernes 2018) Borders are now to be understood as modulating boundaries that not only block external movements, but force specific divided populations into channels within a to some degree unpredictable environment, thereby regulating and integrating them. The sovereign may still decide on the state of emergency, but it has itself become extremely flexible and multiple, which can certainly lead to shifting sovereignty effects, but also to losses of sovereignty.

1 In European countries, the special status of refugees should be abolished and an appropriate response should be to demand the abolition of the refugee regime, the demand for legal equality in terms of the free movement, mobility, education, work permits, etc. of migrants. Attacking the refugee regime would mean attacking the legal non-status of refugees, which is marked, for example, by food vouchers instead of cash, a ban on working, compulsory residence and collective accommodation. However, the measures are currently being tightened in all of these areas. It can be assumed that the legal equality of refugees is not even possible under capitalism for purely "logical" reasons. Even Kant's view that in a nation that defines itself through its territory as the property of its people, the foreigner is inevitably set as a non-person. Just as the protection of the home is a decisive concern of the citizen and private citizen, so the integrity of the borders is the condition of existence of the state, as the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston wanted to report around the year 1900. The nation virtually forbids the establishment of a guest right in which the guest is understood as a legal person. Hospitality is not a philanthropic-humanitarian gesture or a kind of charity, it is the political that must be fought for by the subaltern.

2 25 years ago, Wolfgang Pohrt wrote the following in his essay Der moderne Flüchtling – Über Eric Ambler: "Similar to today, where 100,000 additional people in the FRG would be a negligible figure, while 100. 000 asylum seekers, who have been deprived of their right to freedom of movement and to work, already represent a special case that undermines fundamental rights and may in fact develop into the social problem they are regarded as; similar to today, then (after 1918) refugees became a destabilizing element through the treatment they received. Held in a state of lawlessness, which includes lawlessness, they were the most vivid example of the shrinking scope of the law, of signs of decomposition in the area of state control over the population and generally of the growing inability of the traditional social structure to keep people's lives in order" (Pohrt 1989: 152). When German politicians today boast that we have to "adjust to changes everywhere: Schools, police, housing, courts, health care, everywhere", then this sounds like a reshaping of the areas of state control to be feared for large sections of the population, with the destabilizing element of the refugee assuming the role of trigger to further adopt one or another democratic right and to make the impoverishment of sections of the population even more acceptable, especially that section which the impoverishment machinery of the German state has fixed as cheap labour and welfare recipients.

3 "According to Hannah Arendt, the industrial production of death, for which Auschwitz stands, demonstrates the superfluousness of the human being far beyond the extermination

of those imprisoned in concentration camps, which is continued today with a view to growth, provided that it is no longer a question of the concept of breeding and race, but of the genetic code." (Gerburg Treusch-Dieter 2003: 66)

4 The refugee wants/needs to leave the territory of his state, in which he is subject to the national legal system as a citizen, for very different reasons and therefore all the rules of emigration and immigration also apply to him initially. When fleeing, however, refugees must escape the laws of their own country if, for example, they belong to a disgraced religious community or politically persecuted group, have become victims of land theft or civil wars or are even threatened with starvation, torture or the death penalty.

5 The juridical-political suspension of rights and laws or their permanent rewriting serve here to create new inscriptions of security, which are directed not only against migrants and refugees, but also against the poor in general. Multinational companies can easily cross borders, while the poor and the surplus population are denied access to certain territories without any justification.

translated by deepl.

← PREVIOUS   NEXT →

META

CONTACT
FORCE–INC/MILLE PLATEAUX

IMPRESSUM
DATENSCHUTZERKLÄRUNG

TAXONOMY

CATEGORIES
TAGS
AUTHORS
ALL INPUT

SOCIAL

FACEBOOK
INSTAGRAM
TWITTER